

# Thingkho Le Malcha

A Daily Newsletter by KSO Media & Documentation Cell



## L. Songtun RELIEF CENTRE

L. Songtun Village, Sadar Hills  
(Camp Code: KPI-1-05)

Managed by  
District Administration &  
Kuki CSOs Sadar Hills

**Total Inmates Registered: 388\***

■ Male: 193

■ Female: 195





## KUKI VICTIMS' UPDATE

As on 10.01.2024



**158**  
DEATHS



**200+**  
VILLAGES BURNT



**7000+**  
HOUSES BURNT



**360+**  
CHURCHES &  
SYNAGOGUES BURNT



**41,425+**  
DISPLACED  
PERSONS

Thingkho Le Malcha (charred wood tied with chilli): A war symbol; a pre-arranged secret code agreed upon by the Kukis to inform the people about the commencement of war and on receiving this, one has to remain alert and be ready for the battle.

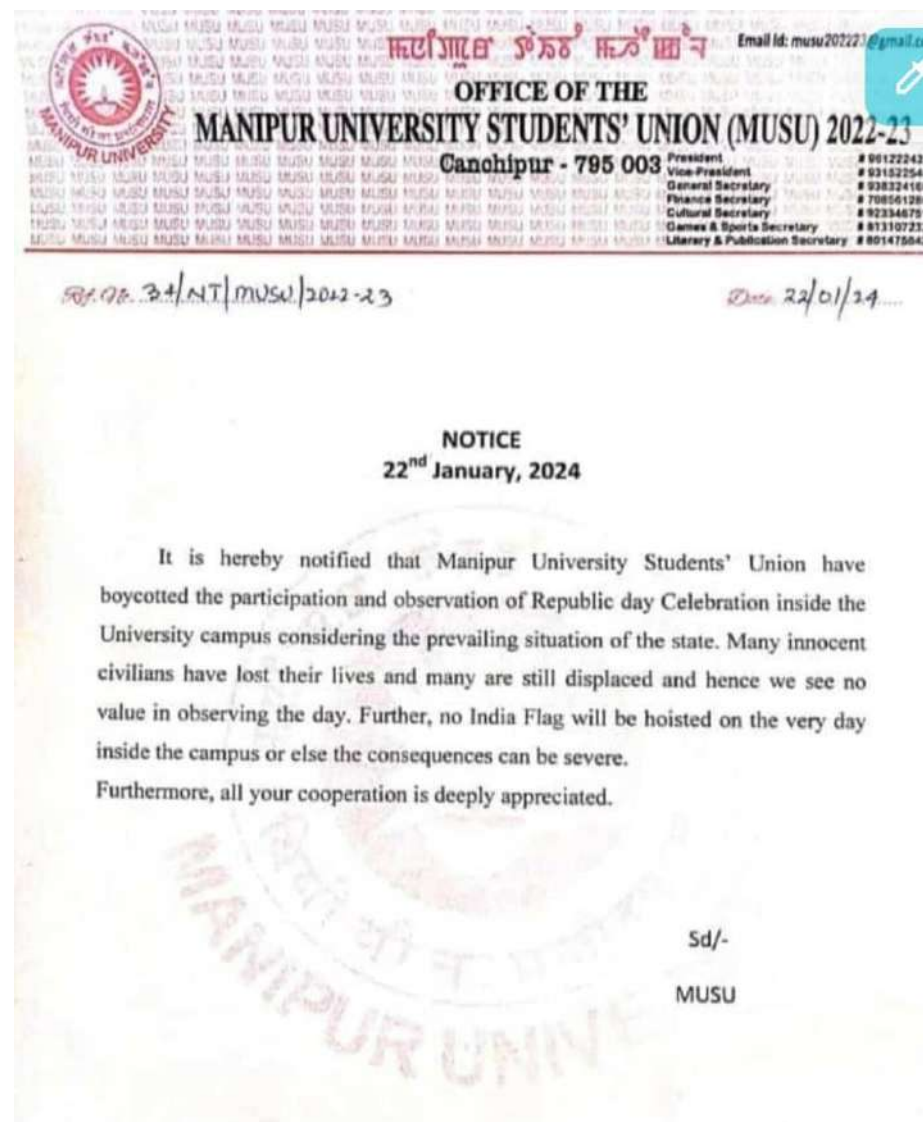


# DIVERGENT PATHS: KUKI DOMINATED DISTRICT PREPARE FOR REPUBLIC DAY AMIDST ETHNIC STRIFE, MEITEIS BOYCOTT IN MANIPUR

A contrasting event is set to unfold on January 26, 2024, during Manipur's 75th Republic Day Celebration. The Kukis and the Meiteis, engaged in conflict since May 3, 2023, when state-sponsored ethnic cleansing began, have showcased distinct perspectives on nationalism. While the Meiteis boycott anything associated with India, including holidays of national importance and films, the Kukis proudly display their Indianism, waving the Indian flag at their numerous rallies. Despite the Meiteis' boycott, the Kuki-dominated district of Churachandpur is preparing for Republic Day with a full-dress rehearsal on January 23.

The District Administration will host the Republic Day celebration at Public Ground, Churachandpur, with Dharun Kumar S, Deputy Commissioner, unfurling the National Flag and taking the salute. Approximately 27 contingents, commanded by Augustine J. Khongsai, Addl. SP/Ccpur, will participate in the parade. The event will feature cultural programs, and commendation certificates and awards will be distributed to government officials for distinguished service.

In alignment with the CorCom's (a conglomerate of valley-based UG groups) call to boycott Republic Day celebrations in Manipur, the Manipur University Students Union (MUSU) has also decided not to participate or observe the event inside the University campus, citing the state's prevailing situation. MUSU, in a notice on January 22, warned of severe consequences if the Indian National Flag is hoisted within the campus, expressing their belief that



observing the day holds no value given the loss of innocent lives and the displacement of many.

Six student bodies in Manipur, including MSF, DESAM, KSA, SUK, and AIMS, along with another student organization, have urged the student community and the public to refrain from participating in Republic Day celebrations and instead hoist black flags on the day.

# MEITEI NEWSPAPER PUBLISH UNVERIFIED NEWS STORY; KIM CLARIFIES

The People's Chronicles, a prominent English Daily based in Imphal, frequently criticized for publishing unverified, concocted, and imaginary events as news items, in its paper today carried a news item under the headline "MHA team departs after meeting KIM." However, this news story was vehemently rejected by the Kuki Inpi Manipur (KIM).

The news itself was also confusing as the report did not mention anything about the venue and time of the meeting between KIM and the MHA team.

Rejecting the claim that KIM participated in any such meeting with the MHA team, KIM issued a clarification statement, stating that it is regrettable that Meitei media houses have succumbed to the propagation of fake news since the violence broke out on May 3, 2023.

In this regard, The People's Chronicle is hereby directed to rectify the same, and all media outlets are urged to uphold ethical standards of journalism. Any further dissemination of false information will be addressed accordingly, KIM warned.



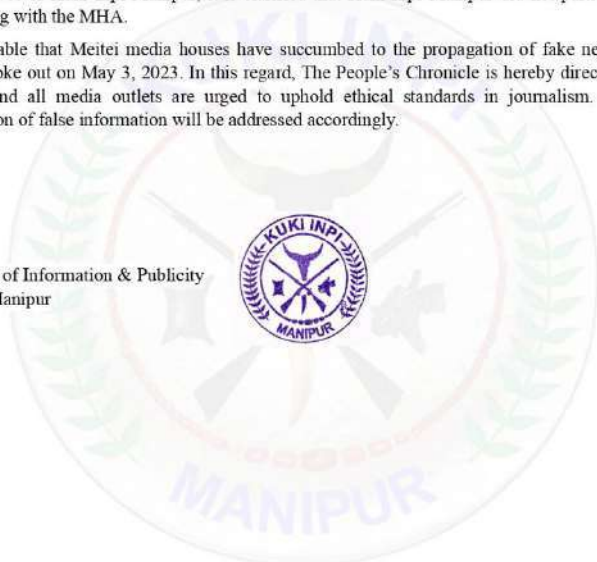
## CLARIFICATION

Kanggui, the 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

In reference to the media report by "The People's Chronicle," claiming that an MHA team had met with representatives of Kuki Inpi Manipur, it is clarified that Kuki Inpi Manipur did not participate in any such meeting with the MHA.

It is regrettable that Meitei media houses have succumbed to the propagation of fake news since the violence broke out on May 3, 2023. In this regard, The People's Chronicle is hereby directed to rectify the same and all media outlets are urged to uphold ethical standards in journalism. Any further dissemination of false information will be addressed accordingly.

Issued by:  
Department of Information & Publicity  
Kuki Inpi Manipur



**You see, the point is that the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone.**

*– Henrik Ibsen*



# ARAMBAI TENGGOL'S POST-KANGLA UTRA DOMINANCE: MPYCC WORKING PRESIDENT ABDUCTED ALLEGEDLY OVER FACEBOOK POST

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh and RS MP Leishemba Sanajaoba's private militia, Arambai Tenggol, has escalated its influence over the Meitei community post-Kangla Utra coronation.

The working president of Manipur Pradesh Youth Congress Committee (MPYCC), Avinash Naorem, has reportedly been abducted over an alleged Facebook post. As of now, Avinash's whereabouts remains unknown, with speculation pointing towards the Arambai Tenggol Headquarter Unit, led by Commander-in-Chief Korounganba Khuman. Known for his prominent role amid Manipur's recent unrest, Korounganba has been seen wielding advanced weaponry on social media, often moving freely in public with police vehicles.

The reported abduction of Avinash Naorem by the private armed militia, Arambai Tenggol, raises alarming concerns about the consequences of an armed gang assuming the role of de-facto state police. This development underscores the potential erosion of law and order, where non-state actors wield significant power and influence, infringing upon the rights and safety of individuals.

When an armed group, associated with political figures, engages in activities such as abductions based on perceived offenses, it signifies a breakdown in the traditional structures of governance and law enforcement. The use of force, coercion, and intimidation to curb freedom of expression, as suggested by the alleged Facebook post, raises questions about the protection of Fundamental Rights in the region.

The situation becomes more precarious when such armed groups operate with apparent impunity, as suggested by their perceived dominance and influence over the Meitei community. The display of sophisticated weaponry and public appearances



with police vehicles without hindrance not only undermines the official law enforcement agencies but also contributes to an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among the general populace. The reported abduction is indicative of a parallel power structure that challenges the legitimacy and authority of the established state machinery.

It is worth mentioning that Keisham Meghachandra, the President of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC), was also assaulted by the Arambai Tenggol during the Kangla Meeting. Several legislators have voiced their opinion that the gathering held yesterday had a political agenda. Observers of the ongoing situation in Manipur have shared their perspective, suggesting that the Arambai Tenggol serves as a protective shield for Chief Minister N. Biren. Individuals who criticize the Biren-led government are reportedly subjected to severe reprimands.

# KANGLA FORT MEETING UNVEILED: FROM PHYSICAL ASSAULT TO INSULTS AND COERCION ON MANIPUR MLAs, MPs

More than three MLAs, including two from the ruling BJP were “beaten up”, “abused” and “compelled” to take oath by the radical armed Meitei group, Arambai Tenggol, at the meeting convened by the radical group at the historic Kangla Fort in Imphal on Wednesday.

The legislators pledged to fulfill demands made by the group, which included updating the base year of the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Manipur to 1951 and abrogating the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement with Kuki insurgents, within 15 days.

However, revelations from a police officer on duty at Kangla shed light on severe humiliation, insults, and torture inflicted upon the legislators during the meeting. The officer disclosed instances of abuse, including verbal threats, physical assault, and even pointing of gun at one of the MLAs.

In a candid account, the officer expressed disappointment over the lack of constructive dialogue among the Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and criticized the pre-planned restrictions imposed during the meeting, preventing discussions and suggestions. The officer highlighted the targeted beating of members who voiced dissent, revealing the atmosphere of fear and intimidation.

The policeman said: “I was also inside. They told us that security forces cannot enter. They verbally abused us (mentioning private parts) saying what do you think of yourself? Don’t you know we are ready to sacrifice our life? They said we will shoot all of you in a burst! Uripok MLA was also kicked and boxed, and they even pointed a gun at him. Wangjing MLA was also slapped from the back. It was all pre-planned. AT said no security force can enter and they warned the DIG/SP saying we will finish all of you, and none dared to utter a word. They had even destroyed the metal detector at the gate in advance.

To speak frankly, if all the honourable members sat together for 2-3 hours and discussed and worked



together for our land and community, it would have been good. But that did not happen. Those of us who entered also, they warned us that no one should come down from the vehicle and no one could cross the helipad.

Frankly speaking, they brought the list of five members who had voiced their dissent against the Hon’ble CM, and they were beaten and then warned. Wangjing Tentha MLA had earlier spoken good about Christians and since he also worked against the CM, they beat him up. Or else, at the venue, he didn’t say anything. MLA Radhesyam, MLA Rajen, they were all warned. In today’s meeting, when MLA Sushindro openly said let’s raise funds for AT, Wangkhem AC MLA smilingly said you all are in the ruling government, if you deduct some amounts from some of the schemes allocated to you, you can collect almost a Crore. In yesterday’s meeting, after Wangkhem AC MLA signed, he saw that they were taking videos, and requested them to not record saying, as long as MLAs are willingly giving signature, isn’t it better not to take video or else people will say they were forcefully made to sign. To

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this, AT Chief Korounganba and followers slapped him and hit him with their fists. They would have beaten him more had the two women MLAs present at the scene not intervened, the two women legislators were warned to mind their businesses or they could be killed.

Frankly speaking, right in front of King Leishemba Sanajaoba; who thinks himself as a member of AT and whom AT members think as their god, a Party President and AC MLA was badly beaten. He felt bad and for about three-four times he held Korounganba's hand with folded hands, he begged him to stop. Is this how we behave? Is this our culture and tradition? We couldn't say anything to them. Still then, at a time when we are talking about standing together within our Meitei community, it can be said that this meeting has sown a seed of division amongst us. The Hon'ble CM didn't come; no concrete action against 10 Kuki MLAs was discussed; MLAs were not given time for discussion or suggestion. In fact, whoever spoke was either shouted at or beaten. This is not a good thing, until yesterday, I didn't utter a word. Only after the

video got viral, I want to tell the truth to the people."

"We are too scared to say anything since dissent would mean the group would attack the residences of MLAs and burn them down," said an MLA who was part of the meeting. "MLAs who disagreed with them and refused to take the oath were beaten up; there were heated arguments, but ultimately, they had to give in to their demand," the MLA said. "The meeting was a politically motivated programme."

Among the legislators who attended the meeting were Inner Manipur MP Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, Rajya Sabha member and the titular king Leishemba Sanajaoba, all from the majority Meitei community. Congress leaders, including former chief minister Okram Ibobi Singh and state Congress chief Keisham Meghachandra Singh, were also present. The only Meitei legislator not in the meeting was Chief Minister N. Biren Singh.

THE SOCIAL MEDIA BUZZ

H S Benjamin Mate @BenjaminMate1

The Tripura copper plate of 641 AD & Manipur Royal family documents has proven beyond doubts that the Kuki-Zo people have been living in Manipur since the 15th century.

@narendramodi @AmitShah @blsanthosh @sambitswaraj



6:04 PM · Jan 24, 2024 · 20.7K Views

Major Amit Bansal (Veteran) @majoramitbansal

One of the biggest Valley based Separatist group of #Manipur has issued a boycott to our #RepublicDay.

No action by Manipur government against this group.

The question of loot of over 6000 sophisticated weapons & more than 7 Lakhs of ammunition is still haunting the country.



7:49 PM · Jan 22, 2024 · 16.3K Views



**FEATURED ARTICLE****Three Reasons Why the Violence Persists in Manipur And the First Step Towards Stopping It****Vishal Arora**

A recent incident in Manipur's Moreh town, where houses and schools were allegedly set ablaze by Manipur Police commandos, illuminates three primary reasons for the ongoing ethnic violence, which has persisted for over eight months. It also offers insights into the first steps required to cease the unrest.

Amid the conflict between the majority Meitei community of the Imphal Valley and the Kuki-Zo tribal people from the hill districts, CCTV footage implicated uniformed individuals, believed to be Manipur Police commandos and members of the Meitei extremist group Arambai Tenggol, in the arson on Jan. 17. These police commandos, forming a special unit within the police department, were seen setting fire to several houses, schools, and the premises of the Moreh Christian Assembly Hall, as reported by ThePrint.

The footage also corroborated allegations made by local residents that personnel from the Assam Rifles, a central force, stood by as men in uniform entered the area and committed acts of arson, according to the news report. The incident was apparently in retaliation for the killing of two state police commandos by suspected Kuki-Zo militants, as reported by The Economic Times.

ThePrint reported that Myanmar's fire department, a foreign agency, played a crucial role in extinguishing the blaze, highlighting the state government's failure to manage the crisis effectively.

Now, let's quickly understand the context of the violence.

Since May 3, 2023, the state has been engulfed in turmoil. At least 158 Kuki-Zo individuals have been killed, tens of thousands remain displaced, and significant property destruction has occurred, according to the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum.

The violence ensued following a directive from the Manipur High Court to the state government, contemplating the possibility of allowing Meiteis to buy land in Kuki-Zo territories. This decision ignited protests among the tribal communities, which rapidly escalated into widespread violence, fuelled by disinformation and extremist rhetoric.

However, the conflict is not solely about ethnic or political differences. It is also deeply rooted in economic interests, particularly in the resource-rich Kuki-Zo areas. The government's interest in these lands, especially under the Bharatiya Janata Party since 2017, has led to policies threatening Kuki-Zo land ownership and livelihoods.

Now, let's examine the three primary reasons for the ongoing violence.

**One: The state government appears to be siding with the Meiteis.**

The Manipur Police, dominated by Meiteis, has been

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consistently accused of complicity since the violence erupted on 3 May 2023, as reported by media outlets including The Guardian, The Wire, The News Minute, and Newsreel Asia.

In August 2023, about three months after the violence began, the Supreme Court noted: “The slow pace of investigation by the investigating machinery in the State of Manipur has emerged from the material which was placed before this Court which is indicative of: a. Significant delays between the occurrence of incidents involving heinous crimes including murder, rape, and arson and the recording of zero FIRs; b. Significant delays in forwarding the zero FIRs to the police stations which have jurisdiction over the incidents; c. Delays in converting the zero FIRs into regular FIRs by the jurisdictional police stations; d. Delays in recording witness statements; e. Lack of diligence in recording the statements under Section 161 and Section 164 CrPC; f. The slow pace of effecting arrests in cases involving heinous offences; and g. The lack of urgency in ensuring medical examination of victims,” as reported by LiveLaw.

Moreover, government data indicates that since the violence began, around 5,600 weapons and 650,000 rounds of ammunition have been stolen, predominantly by the Meiteis, from the Manipur police, according to The Indian Express. These weapons were likely used in attacks against the Kuki-Zo people. The inability of armed policemen to prevent such a significant theft is difficult to comprehend.

Therefore, the situation does not appear to be a simple clash between two communities with the state government acting as a neutral party. If this were the case, the violence would likely have been contained within days. Instead, it seems to be a series of violent acts directed at the Kuki-Zo people by Meitei extremist groups, with the state government, particularly its police department, providing not-so-tacit support. This complicity is the main reason for the continued violence, despite the deployment of over 40,000 security personnel from central forces, including the Indian Army, Assam Rifles, Central Reserve Police Force, and Border Security Force.

Meiteis have also been casualties in the conflict, but mainly as they ventured into Kuki-Zo villages near Meitei areas to launch attacks. These Meitei assailants met resistance

from Kuki-Zo “village volunteers” – armed youths defending their communities in Churachandpur district and other Kuki-Zo regions in Manipur.

### **Two: Partial enforcement of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, or AFSPA.**

The challenge for the central forces stems from the fact that law and order is a state responsibility, as outlined in the Indian Constitution. Consequently, despite being aware of the police’s bias, they cannot take full control of the situation.

Interestingly, AFSPA, which grants enhanced control to central forces and implemented in Manipur in 1980, is currently predominantly in force in tribal areas rather than in regions where Meiteis form the majority.

In April 2022, AFSPA was lifted from 15 police station areas across six districts. Furthermore, about a month before the violence began, on 1 April 2023, the “disturbed area” notification was withdrawn from an additional four police stations. And in late September 2023, the state government issued a notification to maintain the status quo for another six months beginning October 2023, The Hindu reported.

In areas not declared as “disturbed” but still experiencing violence, the role of the central armed forces is limited and supportive; they may be deployed to assist local police and state law enforcement agencies in maintaining law and order. Their role, in that case, is often to provide additional manpower and resources during times of crisis or heightened tension. In disturbed areas, the central armed forces can conduct independent operations without needing direct orders or permission from local police.

This overlooks the nature of insurgencies in Manipur and the changing context after the May 2023 violence began. Despite its controversy, implementing AFSPA across Manipur seems appropriate given the current circumstances.

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The valley-based insurgency, driven by the Meiteis' desire for independence or autonomy, began with Manipur's incorporation into India in 1949. The 1980s and 1990s saw heightened activity by valley-based insurgent groups, leading to government countermeasures and the implementation of AFSPA. Some militant groups from the Valley fled to Myanmar, with reports indicating that some have since returned to the Valley months after the violence started in May 2023.

The Kuki-Zos, on the other hand, sought a separate state within India. In 2008, Kuki-Zo groups entered into an agreement with both the central and Manipur governments, known as the Suspension of Operation.

Regarding the Moreh arson incident, sources from Assam Rifles refuted the allegation that its personnel remained passive spectators, as reported by ThePrint, which also quoted a source stating that the force's involvement is limited to the extent permitted by its "mandate." It was likely a reference to AFSPA.

As for the killing of two police commandos in Moreh, the presence of Meitei police officers and constables was seen as a major provocation by the Kuki-Zo people and groups. Kuki-Zo women organised a sit-in protest following the arrival of additional Meitei policemen, who were deployed via helicopter during the night in mid-October despite peace prevailing in the area and an already heavy presence of central armed forces at the time, as reported by The Hindu.

In early November, all 10 Kuki-Zo Members of the Manipur Legislative Assembly, including eight from the ruling BJP, accused the state police of molesting women and assaulting people from their community in Moreh, as reported by Scroll.in.

### **Three: The central government, as the sole potential mediator, is postponing the necessary tough decision.**

The central government, led by the BJP, has been criticised for not exerting enough pressure on the Manipur state government, also ruled by the same party, to stop the violence.

Initially, the central government seemed to disregard the state government's involvement in the unrest. However, the central government's stance likely shifted towards

pressuring the state following the widespread sharing of a video in July 2023, which showed two Kuki-Zo women being paraded naked by a group of Meitei men. By then, it might have been too late. Weeks earlier, Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh had announced his intention to resign, only to later reverse his decision, citing community pressure to stay in office – a move opposition parties described as a chair-saving drama, as reported by The Hindu.

Mr. Singh's alleged strong popularity and support among the Meitei population in Manipur at the time may have exceeded the central government's control. Taking action against Mr. Singh could provoke significant opposition from the Meitei community. Consequently, the central government apparently faced a difficult decision: either to allow the current situation to continue or to intervene with military force, risking high civilian casualties and fatalities. The latter option is undeniably undesirable, yet granting greater control to central forces might be the first step towards restoring peace.

Under AFSPA, the central government has the authority to declare an area within a state as disturbed, even without the state government's recommendation, if it deems it necessary for maintaining public order or for dealing with insurgent activities.

In addition to prioritising the saving of lives, which should be the foremost concern, the central government also has a compelling national security reason to take action.

While Mr. Singh may appear to maintain control in relation to the Meitei community and its various factions, there is a possibility that valley-based insurgent groups, which now seem to have garnered support among the Meiteis amid the ongoing violence, might revolt against him. Disillusionment with Mr. Singh is emerging, even among some civilian groups. For instance, according to The Sangai Express, Th Sujata, the convenor of Imagi Meira, a women's organisation, recently labelled him as "weak."

First published by [Newsreel Asia](#)



**NEWS ANALYSIS**

## From Manipur to Chinland: Decoding India's Strategic Play in Myanmar

**Goonlien**

In the complex tapestry of international relations, the recent surge of the pro-democratic force in Myanmar seems to be weaving a new chapter, one that not only alters the dynamics of the region but also unveils a strategic game plan by India. The military junta's grip on Myanmar, established three years ago, is now facing an unprecedented challenge, with major towns and cities falling under the control of the pro-democratic forces, sparking speculation about the birth of a potential new nation – Chinland.

For India, nestled in the immediate vicinity of this unfolding drama, the geopolitical implications are profound. The question arises: has India played a role in the rise of the pro-democratic forces? And if so, what are the potential benefits for India in this tumultuous landscape?

India's historical relationship with Myanmar has often been one of cautious observation. The porous border shared between Myanmar and India's northeastern states, such as Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh, has seen a Free Movement Regime in place, fostering familial ties between Kukis, Mizos, Nagas, living on both sides. However, India's interest remained subdued until the recent surge of pro-democratic forces.

The silence of New Delhi during Myanmar's democratic crisis began to unravel when the pro-democratic forces gained momentum in the midst of the Manipur Violence. Speculation arose about the involvement of India's external intelligence agency, RAW, in orchestrating this sudden rise. Initially unorganized and fighting in isolated pockets, the pro-democratic forces began to unify, providing India with a timely strategic advantage.

India's gains from this strategic play are twofold. Firstly, it serves as a counter to China's influence in Myanmar. The military junta's alignment with China had left India on the sidelines. By supporting the pro-democratic forces, India not only challenges China's dominance but also creates a potential buffer state with which it can foster stronger ties.

Secondly, the idea of a greater India comes into play. The tribes of Chinland, if brought under the Indian umbrella, could contribute to a broader regional strategy. This, however, requires substantial efforts to improve the lives of the cognate tribes in India, ensuring an attractive proposition for the newly formed country.

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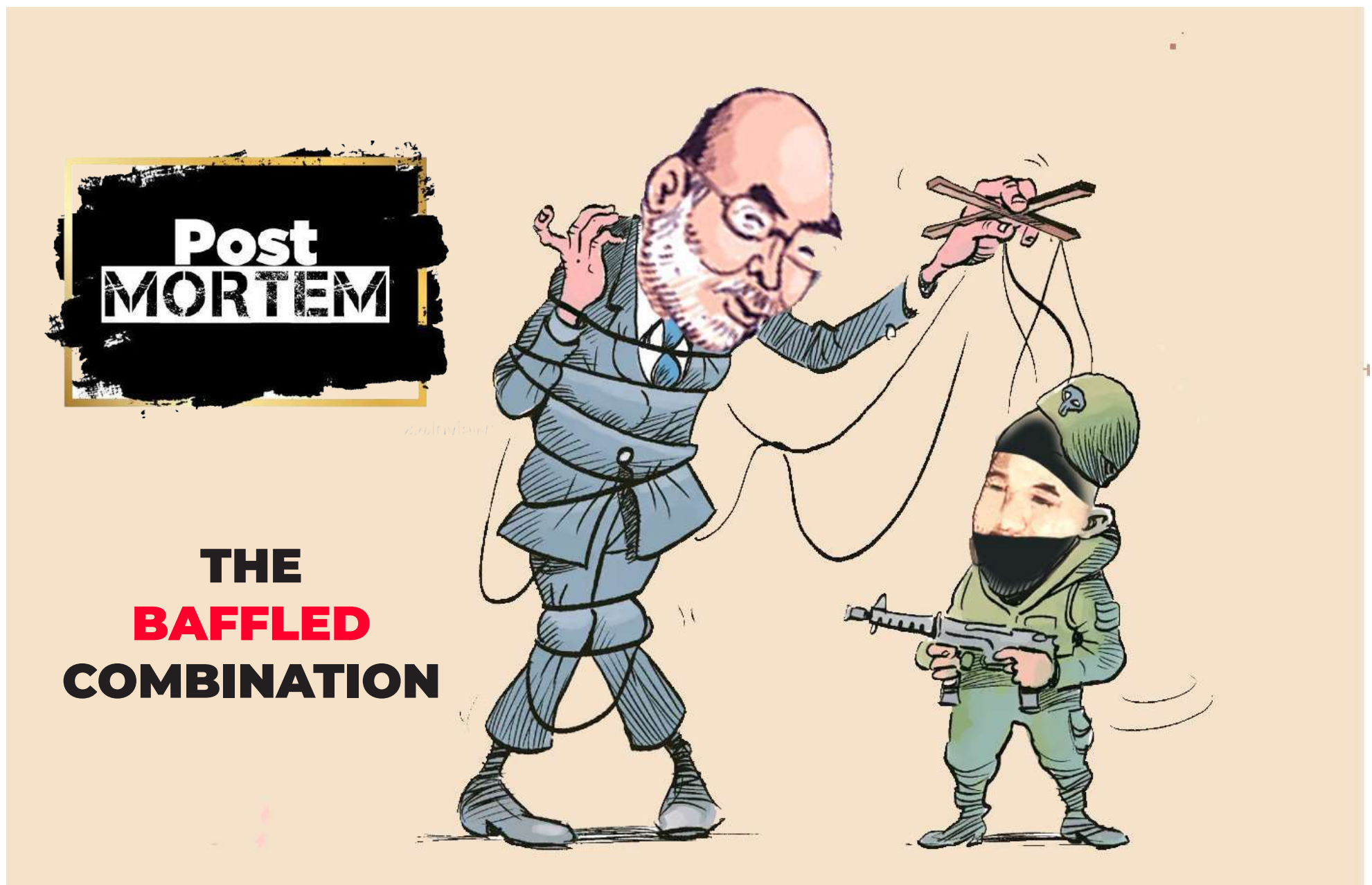


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Amidst these geopolitical considerations, a significant strategic achievement for India is the neutralization of separatist Meitei extremists who found sanctuary in Myanmar. With no casualties on the Indian side, the backbone of these separatist organizations has been broken. This has put the Chief Minister of Manipur, N. Biren Singh, in a position where brokering peace with the Indian government becomes imperative.

A faction of UNLF has already signed a peace truce with Biren himself claiming that talks are on with at least two more groups. If successful, it would mark a considerable victory for New Delhi, bringing extremist groups into the mainstream and diminishing the aspirations of Meitei separatists for a sovereign state.

In essence, if India indeed played a role in the rise of pro-democratic forces in Myanmar, RAW seems to have executed a masterstroke, achieving multiple objectives without resorting to overt military intervention. The inroads into Chinland, the pacification of Meitei extremists, and the potential extension of the northeastern border all represent strategic gains for India. As the geopolitical chessboard evolves, the cards played by New Delhi appear to be positioning India as a key player in shaping the future of the region. The symphony of geopolitics orchestrated by India may well set the stage for a new era in regional stability.





# THE ROOT THAT DEFINES WHO I AM

The root that defines who I am.  
Yes! I may be brought up in the towns and cities.  
Or may be exposed to a different environment  
But I have never forgotten my roots.  
The root that defines who I am.

Mountains and hills covered with green carpet of  
grasses and trees.  
Fresh water flowing from its peak down the base with  
birds chirping sweetly.  
This I say is my root  
The root that defines who I am.

Little don't you know that a tiny spark can ignite a  
massive fire?  
Well this little nation of mine isn't any different.  
Because there is a little spark that burns within us.  
With our Almighty father we will ignite and burn  
together - invincible.

This I say is my root  
The root that defines who I am.

*~Lily Kipgen*

